

**ANNUAL WESTFIELD TOWN MEETING AND WESTFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING
MINUTES
MARCH 3, 2015**

The legal voters of the Town of Westfield and the legal voters of the Westfield School District are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Westfield Community Center, 59 North Hill Road, on Tuesday, March 3, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. to transact the following business:

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. Selectman Jacques Couture opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

SCHOOL MEETING:

Article 1. To elect a moderator for a term of one year (2016):

Motion by Mike Piper to nominate Pat Sagui. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

Moderator Sagui explained that the School meeting and the Town Meeting will now be held as separate meetings with separate moderators beginning this year. She stated as soon as the School Meeting adjourns the Town Meeting will begin. She also reviewed the procedural and voting practices for the meeting.

With no objection from the floor Representative Mark Higley addressed the voters. He spoke about the importance of taking Senator Doyle's survey and explained how the results are used to rank the importance of what the legislature addresses during their session. He discussed the Water Quality Bill (H35/S49) which could impose a tax on small farms. He discussed the consolidation of the Derby Emergency Call Center with the Williston Center to save money. He stated that some of the work stations have already been moved to Williston. He also expressed his concerns about the increased education tax and a possible carbon tax.

Article 2. To elect one Westfield School Board Member for a term of three years (2018):

Motion by Dianne Laplante to nominate Chad Prue. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

Article 3. To elect one High School Board Member for a term of three years (2018):

Karen O'Donnell has held this office but due to time constraints does not want to run for the position again. She was thanked for her service. There were no nominations from the floor. Debra Bevins will consider the position. The Town Clerk will call the Superintendent's office to see if the Selectboard or the School Board makes an appointment in this situation. **Article 3 was passed over.**

Article 4. Shall the legal voters of the Westfield Town School District vote to approve \$200,000 for 7th and 8th grade tuition and \$24,212.23 for local school expenses?

Motion by Mary Lou Jacobs and second by Pauline Couture to bring the article to the floor.

Discussion: School Board members Loren Petzoldt and Chad Prue as well as Jay/Westfield Elementary School Principal Kristy Ellis were present to answer questions. It was explained that the budget is up because of a larger than usual number of 7th & 8th graders. 7th & 8th graders can choose which school they go to. IEP's are also up because of student needs. Currently the Jr. High tuition is slightly above average for the per pupil

cost in the state. There are seventeen 7th & 8th grade students. Loren Petzoldt did not know the exact cost per pupil if we were part of the Union District but he said in the past it has been more than we are paying now. If we were to join the Union District we would have to pay the transportation expense for the children. Currently we are not paying for busing because a bus is going to Jay.

Article 4 passed by voice vote.

Article 5. Shall the voters of the Westfield Town School District appropriate the sum of \$5,000 to be put into the Buildings & Grounds Reserve Fund for future renovations to the Jay/Westfield Joint Elementary School, contingent upon approval of Jay voters? (Paper ballot to be co-mingled with Jay)

Motion by Mike Piper and second by Margaret Rowley to bring the article to the floor.

Discussion: Loren Petzoldt explained the history of asking for money each year to be put into the Buildings & Grounds Reserve Fund. The School Board feels it is important to continually make the needed repairs to the 20 year old structure. The money that was approved last year was used to purchase a new furnace so there is currently no money in this reserve fund. The Board feels the next project needing attention will be the parking lot. It will take a few years to raise the required money. Both towns have to approve the funds for the vote to pass.

WESTFIELD: YES - 50 NO - 4

JAY: YES - 18 NO - 2 (Per Jay Town Clerk, Tara Morse 3/4/15)

Article 5 passed by paper ballot by Westfield and Jay voters.

Article 6. Shall the Westfield Town School District appropriate the sum of \$1,284,679 dollars to defray the expenses and liabilities for the Jay/Westfield Joint Elementary School for the ensuing year with a net assessment to the town of \$438,717? (Paper ballot to be co-mingled with Jay)

Motion by Mike Piper and second by Laini Fondiller to bring the article to the floor.

Discussion: Questions from the floor were answered. There are currently 50 Jay students, 24 Westfield students and 3 that reside in both towns. According to discussion from the floor the average cost per student is \$18,279.88. Loren Petzoldt stated for budgetary purposes the School Board has to include the actual cost per student but then there is state aid that reduces this cost. Principal, Kristy Ellis, said the state is now mandating 10 hours per week for Pre-K. Jay/Westfield Elementary School will have a potential of 17 students participating this fall in their Pre-K program. It will be a ½ day program for 3 year olds and a full day program for 4 year olds. No new teachers will need to be hired for the Pre-K program. Declining enrollment is a concern for the school as some expenses are fixed and can't be eliminated if the enrollment declines. Having the Pre-K program will increase revenue for the school as Early Education money will come into the budget to fund the program. The budget reflects the anticipated expenses for the Pre-K program including busing for the 4 year olds. 3 year olds will not ride the bus. Kristy Ellis stated there is room in the school for the Pre-K program even if it grows. She stressed her belief that investing in our youngest learners is our best investment and has lasting impact. The School Board and teaching staff were thanked for their daily efforts.

WESTFIELD: YES - 41 NO - 12

JAY: YES - 14 NO - 6 (Per Jay Town Clerk, Tara Morse 3/4/15)

Article 6 passed by paper ballot by Westfield and Jay voters.

Article 7. To transact any other non-binding business which may legally come before this meeting:

No other business was brought to the floor for discussion.

Article 8. To adjourn:

Motion by Laini Fondiller and second by Dianne Laplante to adjourn the meeting at 11:40 a.m. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

TOWN MEETING:

Immediately following the School Meeting the Town Meeting was called to order at 11:41 a.m.

Article 1. To elect a moderator for a term of one year (2016):

Motion by Laini Fondiller to nominate Pat Sagui. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

Article 2. To hear and act upon the reports of the town officers:

Motion by Mike Piper and second by Laini Fondiller to accept the Town Reports as presented. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

Article 3. To elect all necessary town officials required by law:

- a. **Town Clerk, 3-year term (2018):** Motion by Connie LaPlume to nominate LaDonna Dunn. **Motion passed by voice vote.**
- b. **Town Treasurer, 3-year term (2018):** Motion by Mike Piper to nominate Mary Lou Jacobs. **Motion passed by voice vote.**
- c. **Selectman, 3-year term (2018):** Motion by Mary Lou Jacobs to nominate Yves Daigle. **Without objection the Clerk was instructed to cast one ballot electing Yves Daigle.**
- d. **Auditor, 3-year term (2018):** Motion by Mary Brenner to nominate Dianne Laplante. **Without objection the Clerk was instructed to cast one ballot electing Dianne Laplante.**
- e. **Delinquent Tax Collector, 1-year term (2016):** Motion by Connie LaPlume to nominate Joyce Crawford. **Motion passed by voice vote.**
- f. **1st Constable, 1-year term (2016):** Motion by Connie LaPlume to nominate Normand Piette. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

- g. **2nd Constable, 1-year term (2016):** Motion by Dianne Laplante to nominate Mike Piper. **Motion passed by voice vote.**
- h. **Lister, 3-year term (2018):** Motion by Mary Lou Jacobs to nominate Scott Dunn. **Without objection the Clerk was instructed to cast one ballot electing Scott Dunn.**
- i. **Town Agent, 1-year term (2016):** Motion by Mary Lou Jacobs to nominate Dianne Laplante. **Motion passed by voice vote.**
- j. **Town Grand Juror, 1-year term (2016):** Motion by Mary Lou Jacobs to nominate Mike Piper. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

Article 4. Shall the legal voters approve \$59,744.55 for the following appropriations?

There was a motion by Dianne Laplante and second by Mike Piper to bring the article to the floor. The Moderator explained if all were in agreement she would read the letter of each appropriation request and anyone wishing to discuss or make an amendment to the amount could do so before she would move on to the next item. She stated if there were no objections a total dollar amount would be voted on at the end of the appropriation reading which would include the amended amounts. With no objections, The Moderator read the appropriations and noted where increases over last year's amounts were being requested. The 2014 amount is noted in parenthesis following the items that had requested increases.

- a. **\$250 to American Red Cross**
- b. **\$300 to Area Agency on Aging for Northeastern Vermont**
- c. **\$100 to Felines & Friends Foundation (new request for 2015)**
- d. **\$250 to Green Mountain Farm-to-School, Inc.**
- e. **\$50 to Green Up Vermont**
- f. **\$450 to Hazen's Notch Association Campership Fund**
- g. **\$250 to Jay Food Shelf**

Amendment: Motion by Dianne Laplante and second by Laini Fondiller to **amend Article 4g to \$500.**

Vote: Motion passed by voice vote.

- h. **\$800 to Jay Athletic Association**
- i. **\$200 to Jay Focus Group & the Jay Focus Group Children's Halloween Party**
- j. **\$200 to Jay Peak Post No. 28**

Discussion: Dianne Laplante commented on what a great job she thought the American Legion did decorating the graves with the flags.

- k. **\$200 to Missisquoi River Basin Association**
- l. **\$10,628.04 to Missisquoi Valley Ambulance Service (\$10,480 in 2014):**

Discussion: Robert Doherty asked why the Ambulance company still needed to ask for so much money if everyone is required to have health insurance by law. Jenn

Piette was present from Missisquoi Valley Ambulance and explained that insurance companies are paying less now for services and that the Ambulance writes off thousands of dollars each year for services they are not reimbursed for.

m. \$4,000 to Montgomery Fire Department:

Discussion: Someone asked why the Town was using the Montgomery Fire Department. Selectman Yves Daigle explained their services are used for Westfield residents living on Route 242 and in Alpine Haven.

n. \$75 to North Country Friends of the Vermont Symphony Orchestra

o. \$200 to Northeast Kingdom Community Action, Inc. (NEKCA)

p. \$563 to Northeast Kingdom Human Services (NKHS)

q. \$200 to Northeast Kingdom Learning Services (NEKLS)

r. \$500 to Orleans County Citizen Advocacy (OCCA)

s. \$2,500 to Orleans Essex Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) and Hospice, Inc.

t. \$500 to Pope Memorial Frontier Animal Shelter, Inc.

u. \$250 to Old Stone House Museum (Orleans County Historical Society)

v. \$11,992.51 to Orleans County Sheriff's Department:

Amendment: Motion by Marielle Tetreault and second by Chad Prue to amend the appropriation amount in **Article 4v to \$8,000.**

Discussion: Serge from the Sheriff's Department explained that the Sheriff's Department currently patrols approximately 5 hours per week in Westfield. The Town has a contract with the Sheriff's Department so if the dollar amount is decreased the patrol hours will also be decreased. Serge also explained that the Sheriff's Department does not get any federal money. They get County money for office expenses and their money for their cars and patrolling staff comes from town appropriations. Yves Daigle explained the Sheriff's Department provides a monthly report that shows the patrol dates, patrolling officers name/hours patrolled and the dollar amount from citations issued. Dianne Laplante commented on the number of burglaries in Westfield and wondered if the type of services provided should be evaluated. Steve Dykeman felt there was a good Sheriff's presence in Town. Roger Gosselin said he felt this was a minuscule amount of money to pay for public safety. There were no further questions.

Vote: The amendment was defeated by voice vote.

w. \$600 to Rural Community Transportation, Inc.

x. \$1,500 to Troy and Area Lions Club to run the Westfield Senior Meal Site

y. \$22,591 to Troy Fire Department

z. \$400 to Umbrella

aa. \$95 to Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL)

bb. \$100 to Vt. Rural Fire Protection Task Force- Vt. Assoc. of Conservation Dist.

Article 4 was amended to \$59,994.55 and passed by a voice vote.

Article 5. Shall the legal voters approve the Selectboard to spend up to \$20,000.00 from reserve funds in the general fund to install an access ramp at the Hitchcock Museum & Library?

Motion: Motion by Mary Lou Jacobs and second by Mike Piper to bring the article to the floor.

Discussion: Yves Daigle explained that currently the access ramp does not meet ADA standards. It is too steep and too narrow. He said the parking area also needs to be expanded. Sue Scott felt \$20,000 seemed expensive for a ramp and asked if other quotes had been sought. Yves said they had and that price included the railings for the ramp and expanding the parking area. The question was asked if installing a new ramp implied the Library would be open for more hours. Yves replied no not at this time. Mary Brenner commented that the Library does not meet many standards. Connie LaPlume commented on the Americans Disability Act. Mary Lou Jacobs said this is not just the library but also a museum. John Elliott asked if the ramp will be heated. Yves said it could be. Anne Lazor said putting in the ramp is a good place to begin and then other ADA standards could be worked on in the future.

Vote: Article 5 passed by voice vote.

Article 6. Shall the legal voters approve general government fund expenditures of \$257,435.55, of which \$131,690.55 shall be raised by taxes and \$125,745.00 by non-tax revenues?

Motion: Motion by Mike Piper and second by Dianne Laplante to bring the article to the floor and amended to include the increased appropriation for 4.g: Shall the legal voters approve general government fund expenditures of \$257,685.55, of which \$131,940.55 shall be raised by taxes and \$125,745.00 by non-tax revenue?

Discussion: A citizen asked where the non-tax revenue comes from. Mary Lou Jacobs explained it is from the money that comes from State programs and revenue that comes in through the Town Clerks Office. Yves Daigle commented that this year's budget is down slightly from last year.

Vote: Article 6 passed by voice vote.

Article 7. Shall the legal voters approve highway fund expenditures of \$284,533.00, of which \$204,424.21 shall be raised by taxes and \$80,108.79 by non-tax revenues?

Motion: Motion by Mike Piper and second by John Elliott to bring the article to the floor.

Vote: Article 7 passed by voice vote.

Moderator Pat Sagui read the Australian Ballot Articles 8-13 and explained that questions may be asked about these Articles.

Article 8. Shall the voters authorize the Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District to appropriate and expend a budget of \$743,598? (Australian Ballot)

Discussion: A citizen asked where the money comes from for the Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District. Yves Daigle explained that they are self-funded.

Yes – 54 No – 10 Blank - 1

Article 9. To elect a Jay/Westfield Joint School Treasurer for the school year 2015-2016: (Australian Ballot)

Tara Morse (2016) Yes – 63 Blank – 2 Write-in - 0

Article 10. To elect a Westfield School Treasurer for the school year 2015-2016: (Australian Ballot)

Rita Petzoldt (2016) Yes – 61 Blank – 2 Write-in - 1

Article 11. Shall the North Country Union High School District appropriate the sum of \$15,798,336 to defray its regular expenses and liabilities for North Country Union High School and the North Country Career Center for the ensuing year and to pay any balance left unpaid from the preceding year? (Australian Ballot)

Yes – 40 No – 24 Blank - 1

Article 12. Shall the North Country Union High School District authorize the Board of School Directors to place \$409,000 of undesignated FY2014 fund balance from the general fund operations in the Capital Improvement Reserve fund? (Australian Ballot)

Yes – 39 No – 24 Blank - 2

Article 13. Shall the North Country Union High School District authorize the Board of School Directors to establish a Technology Reserve Fund and place \$208,000 of undesignated North Country Career Center FY2014 fund balance from the general fund operations in this fund? (Australian Ballot)

Yes – 38 No – 24 Blank – 3

Article 14. To transact any other non-binding business which may legally come before this meeting.

A. Dennis Neumann, Co-Chair of the Disaster Shelter Initiative (DSI) thanked the 17 volunteers on the Committee. The DSI Committee held their annual training drill and they are prepared to open the Red Cross Shelter if there is an emergency. He encouraged citizens to take one of the Family Emergency Preparedness Handbooks that were on the table and are available at the Town Clerk's Office.

B. Jacques Couture discussed the Wild & Scenic Designation for the Missisquoi & Trout Rivers. Last year the Town's approved the resolution. Congress and the Senate passed the Bill and it was signed into law by the President. A new committee will now be formed to implement the Study Plan. This is a national program and will get federal funding. The website is www.vtwsr.org.

C. Yves Daigle reported about 60% of Westfield households are recycling. He said this is a third more than the state average. The Universal Recycling Law Act 148 begins July 1. After this date it will be illegal to put anything into the trash that is recyclable. Westfield's Recycling Center is financed through the trash and tire fees collected. Individual residents from six towns also use Westfield's Recycling Center. This provides additional revenue. Recycling is open every Saturday from 8 a.m. until noon. This spring

we are planning to have a Planet Aid Box for recyclable clothing and shoes. A couple of people expressed concern over this because they felt the clothing did not stay local and/or in the country. Chad Prue asked if we will have zero sort available at our Recycling Center. Yves said not at this time.

D. LaDonna Dunn said the website is finished and thanked Sue Neumann, Mary Brenner and Carrie Glessner for their help on the site. The address is www.westfield.vt.gov. Any Westfield business wanting a free listing on the Shop Westfield page should contact the Town Clerk's Office.

Article 15. To adjourn:

Motion by Mike Piper and second by Joe Rubano to adjourn the meeting at 1:15 p.m.
Motion passed by voice vote.

I certify that the above minutes are a true and accurate report of the votes taken at the Westfield Town & School Meeting held Tuesday, March 3, 2015.

LaDonna Dunn, Town Clerk

These minutes have been approved by the following three Town Officials:

Pat Sagui, Moderator

Yves Daigle, Selectboard Chair

Loren Petzoldt, School Board Chair